Time and Tide

MINER BIRDS OF THE *MONTANA* and the Waterstone of the Wild

A. The Ancient Walls by Richard Nisbet (original link: http://home.earthlink.net/~rnisbet/frame8.html)

"Hiram Bingham was told of a plant whose juices softened rock so that the surfaces would join perfectly. There are reports of such a plant, including this one by one of the early Spanish Chroniclers:

> "While encamped by a rocky river, he watched a bird with a leaf in its beak light on a rock, lay down the leaf and peck at it. The next day the bird returned. By then there was a concavity where the leaf had been.
> By this method the bird created a drinking cup to catch the splashing waters of the river."

Considering the fact that lichen softens stone to attach its roots, and considering the ongoing extinction of plant species, perhaps this isn't really such a far-fetched notion."

CUZCO TALES by Richard Nisbet.

The Book: http://www.cuscotales.com/
Excerpts: http://www.cuscotales.com/exerpts.html

B.1 EXPLORATION FAWCETT I

"Talking of birds, all through the Peruvian and Bolivian *Montaña* is to be found a small bird like a kingfisher, which makes its nest in neat round holes in the rocky escarpments above the river. These holes can plainly be seen, but are not usually accessible, and strangely enough they are found only where the birds are present. I once expressed surprise that they were lucky enough to find nesting-holes conveniently placed for them, and so neatly hollowed out as though with a drill.

'They make the holes themselves.'

The words were spoken by a man who had spent a quarter of a century in the forests. 'I've seen how they do it, many a time. I've watched, I have, and seen the birds come to the cliff with leaves of some sort in their beaks, and cling to the rock like woodpeckers to a tree while they rubbed the leaves in a circular motion over the surface. Then they would fly off, and come back with more leaves, and carry on with the rubbing process. After three or four repetitions they dropped the leaves and started pecking at the place with their sharp beaks, and–here's the marvelous part–they would soon open out a round hole in the stone. Then off they'd go again, and go through the rubbing process with leaves several times before continuing to peck. It took several days, but finally they had opened out holes deep enough to contain their nests. I've climbed up and taken a look at them, and, believe me, a man couldn't drill a neater hole ! '

'Do you mean to say that the bird's beak can penetrate solid rock?'

'A woodpecker's beak penetrates solid wood, doesn't it?.. No, I don't think the bird can get through solid rock. I believe, as everyone who has watched them believes, that those birds know of a leaf with juice that can soften up

rock till it's like wet clay."

I put this down as a tall tale–and then, after I had heard similar accounts from others all over the country, as a popular tradition. Some time later an Englishman, whose reliability I cannot doubt, told me a story that may throw some light on it.

' My nephew was down in the Chuncho country on the Pyrene River in Peru, and his horse going lame one day he left it at a neighbouring *chacra*, about five miles away from his own, and walked home. Next day he walked over to get his horse, and took a short cut through a strip of forest he had never before penetrated. He was wearing riding breeches, top boots, and big spurs–not the little English kind, but the great Mexican spurs four inches long, with rowels bigger than a half-crown piece–and these spurs were almost new. When he got to the *chacra* after a hot and difficult walk through thick bush he was amazed to find that his beautiful spurs were gone–eaten away somehow, till they were no more than black spikes projecting an eighth of an inch. He couldn't understand it, till the owner of the chacra asked him if by any chance he had walked through a certain plant about a foot high, with dark reddish leaves. My nephew at once remembered that he came through a wide area where the ground was thickly covered with such a plant. 'That's it!' said the *chacarero*. That's what's eaten your spurs away! That's the stuff the Incas used for shaping stones. The juice will soften rock up till it's like paste. You must show me where you found the plants.' When they came to look for the place they couldn't find it. It's not easy to retrace your steps in jungle where no trails exist.' "

Brian Fawcett, ***EXPLORATION FAWCETT***, The Companion Book Club, London, 1954: 105-106.

B.2 EXPLORATION FAWCETT II

The Incas inherited fortresses and cities built by a previous race and restored from a state of ruin without much difficulty. Where they themselves built with stone–in the regions where stone was the most convenient material, for in the coastal belt they generally used *adobe*–they adopted the same incredible mortarless joints that are characteristic of the older megalithic edifices, but made no attempts to use the huge stone masses favoured by their predecessors. I have heard it said that they fitted their stones together by means of a liquid that softened the surfaces to be joined to the consistency of clay.

“I don't believe it! ' said a friend who had been a member of the Yale Peruvian Expedition that discovered Machu picchu in 1911. "I've seen the quarries where these stones were cut. I've seen them in all stages of preparation, and can assure you the fitting surfaces were worked by hand and nothing else!'

[but] another friend of mine told me the following story:

"Some years ago, when I was working in the mining camp a Cerro de Pasco (a place 14,000 feet up in the Andes of Central Peru), I went out one Sunday with some other *Gringos* to visit some old Inca or Pre-Inca graves to see if we could find anything worth while. We took our grub with us, and, of course, a few bottles of *pisco* and beer; and a *peon*-a cholo to help dig.

"Well, we had our lunch when we got to the burial place, and afterwards started to open up some graves that seemed to be untouched. We worked hard, and knocked off every now and again for a drink. I don't drink myself, but others did, especially one chap who poured too much *pisco* into himself and was inclined to be noisy. When we knocked off, all we found was an earthenware jar of about a quart capacity, and with liquid inside it.

'I bet its *chicha*!' said the noisy one. 'Let's try it and see what sort of stuff the Incas drank!

'Probably poison us if we do,' observed another.

'Tell you what, then–let's try it out on the *peon* !'

They dug the seal and stopper out of the jar's mouth, sniffed at the contents and called the *peon* over to them.

'Take a drink of this *chicha*,' ordered the drunk. The peon took the jar, hesitated and then with an expression of fear spreading over his face thrust it into the drunk's hands and backed away.

'No, no, senor,' he murmured. 'Not that. That's not *chicha*!' He turned and made off.

The drunk put the jar down on a flat-topped rock and set off in pursuit. 'Come on boys-catch him!' he yelled. They

caught the wretched man, dragged him back, and ordered him to drink the contents of the jar. The *peon* struggled madly, his eyes popping. There was a bit of a scrimmage, and the jar was knocked over and broken, its contents forming a puddle on the top of the rock. Then the *peon* broke free and took to his heels.

Everyone laughed. It was a huge joke. But the exercise had made them thirsty and they went over to the sack where the beer-bottles lay.

About ten minutes later I bent over the rock and casually examined the pool of spilled liquid. It was no longer liquid; the whole patch where it had been, and the rock under it, were as soft as wet cement! It was as though the stone had melted, like wax under the influence of heat.–Ed."

Brian Fawcett, ***EXPLORATION FAWCETT***, The Companion Book Club, London, 1954: 317-318.

C. ANCIENT STONE TECHNOLOGY

by Konstantin Artz.

Mysteries of the ancient cultures: Stone Technology

http://members.tripod.com/~kon_artz/cultures/stonetec.htm

D. FABRICATION OF STONE OBJECTS, BY GEOPOLYMERIC SYNTHESIS IN THE PRE-INCAN HUANKA CIVILISATION (PERU)

by Dr. JOSEPH DAVIDOVITS

The Geopolymer Library: List of articles

E. PUMA PUNKU THEORIES (2012)

by Ewald Shuster.

- Home
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Collated by John N. Harris, MA

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